

My name is Dave Morrison and my comments are aimed largely at Payola and accountability of 'local' radio to the community. On November 18th 2004, my band "US" was featured on the Discovery Channel's "No Opportunity Wasted" reality TV program hosted by Phil Keoghan of Emmy-award winning show the "Amazing Race". This event is a BIG DEAL for the little town of Pocatello, Idaho (pop.51466). One "US" song "Hole in the Head" was featured throughout the episode, so I thought local airplay of this song would entice more locals to watch a national (worldwide) TV show taped largely in Pocatello. When the local radio stations were approached, we learned we could "talk on the air" and give away promotional merchandise, but under no circumstances would our music be allowed on the public airways of Pocatello. I wonder: Is this Payola? A local band's documentary on a major national network and we can't get any local airplay! That should be a crime!

Radio has been the backbone of American Music; without radio-play too many musicians suffer creatively and financially. Without radio, Elvis would not have ever been King. Yet today, because of the strangle-hold the radio industry has on the nation's airwaves, emerging trends and artists have no chance to develop properly, leaving a blackhole of 'cookie cutter' and 'me-too' 'wannabe's. American music is in danger of losing our historic lead in creativity. Payola is hurting the public and the true artists, leaving us with the same 20 songs on the same 20 stations. Thirty years ago Pocatello had two FM radio stations; yet, today with eight stations, song diversity is even lower. I thought more stations meant more variety. No wonder no one likes the music on today's radio. Long live XM and Sirius.

My suggestion is for the Radio Industry (and TV) is for all direct and indirect compensation to be taxed by the federal government. If the record labels can afford Payola, they can afford more taxes. The public should benefit in some manner from 'paid programming'. The public will always appreciate a lower tax bill.

I believe that DJs should be empowered (by law or regulation) to choose 20% of the playlist and all stations must be REQUIRED to take (and honor reasonable) 'requests'. I also feel that all radio stations should be mandated to air 5% locally produced content (within 50 miles of the main transmitter) and another 5% produced in the same state. This would help strengthen local economies and help re-establish the regional music scenes. This would also help musicians live in the location of their choosing instead of moving to LA, NY, or Nashville.